

Management of Food Allergens

Target Group: All staff	Version: 6	First Issue Date: Food Allergy Policy November 2014
Approved by: Leadership Team 28/5/25	Date Last Approved/Reviewed: April 2023	Effective Date: May 2025- April 2028

Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest

Version

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose-	3
3. Objectives of this Policy or Procedure	3
5. Scope.....	4
6. Responsibilities.....	4
7. Definitions	5
8. Policy or Procedure Implementation.....	6
8.1 Catering Procedures	6
8.2 Caregiver Dining Room	6
8.3 Catering for Functions and Hospitality	7
8.4 Training.....	7
8.5 Communication Strategy.....	7
9. Regulatory Requirements/ References	7
10. Evaluation Measures	8
11. Related Documents	8
12. Appendices.....	9
Appendix 1 – Equality impact Assessment (EIA) Tool	10
Appendix 2 – Food Allergy Signage.....	12
Appendix 3: Allergen Matrix.....	13

1. Introduction

Food allergies and intolerances are a growing concern in healthcare settings, where the safety and well-being of patients, caregivers and visitors are paramount. Holy Cross Hospital is committed to providing a safe environment for all individuals, particularly those with food allergies. This policy outlines the comprehensive measures and procedures in place to manage food allergens effectively, ensuring that food provided within the hospital is stored, handled, prepared, and served safely.

The policy emphasises the importance of clear communication, rigorous training, and adherence to best practices in food handling. It aims to minimise the risk of allergic reactions through meticulous planning and coordination among clinical and catering teams, and other relevant parties. By implementing this policy, Holy Cross Hospital upholds the highest standards of care and safety, fostering an inclusive environment where the needs of individuals with food allergies are met with diligence and compassion.

This policy shall be reviewed at regular intervals not exceeding three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational needs.

2. Purpose-

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that food provided within Holy Cross Hospital is stored, handled, prepared, and served in a manner that is safe for all patients, caregivers, and visitors who have food allergies. This policy aims to establish clear guidelines and procedures to manage food allergens effectively, thereby minimising the risk of allergic reactions. By implementing this policy, Holy Cross Hospital seeks to provide a safe and inclusive environment where the needs of individuals with food allergies are met with diligence and care. The policy ensures that all relevant caregivers are trained and educated on the importance of managing food allergies, and that appropriate control measures are in place to prevent accidental contamination. This comprehensive approach supports the hospital's commitment to delivering high standards of care and safety for everyone.

3. Objectives of this Policy or Procedure

- **Ensure Safe Food Handling:** To ensure that food provided within Holy Cross Hospital is stored, handled, prepared, and served in a manner that is safe for individuals with food allergies.
- **Minimise Risk of Allergic Reactions:** To minimise the risk of allergic reactions through effective management of food allergens, including clear labelling, standardised recipes, and rigorous procedures.
- **Provide Training and Education:** To ensure that all relevant caregivers receive appropriate training and education on managing food allergies, including understanding food allergens, recognising symptoms, and implementing safety measures.
- **Enhance Communication:** To establish clear communication channels between clinical and catering teams, and other relevant parties to ensure that information about food allergies is accurately conveyed and acted upon.

- **Compliance with Legislation:** To ensure compliance with food safety regulations and legislation, including providing allergen information to consumers and adhering to labelling rules.
- **Promote Inclusive Environment:** To foster an inclusive environment where the needs of individuals with food allergies are met with diligence and compassion, ensuring their safety and well-being.
- **Continuous Improvement:** To regularly review and update the policy to reflect best practices and current guidelines, ensuring continuous improvement in managing food allergens.

4. Policy Statement

Holy Cross Hospital is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all patients, caregivers, and visitors, particularly those with food allergies. This policy outlines the comprehensive measures and procedures in place to manage food allergens effectively, ensuring that food provided within the hospital is stored, handled, prepared, and served safely. The hospital recognises the importance of clear communication, rigorous training, and adherence to best practices in food handling to minimise the risk of allergic reactions. By implementing this policy, Holy Cross Hospital upholds the highest standards of care and safety, fostering an inclusive environment where the needs of individuals with food allergies are met with diligence and compassion.

5. Scope

The scope of this document is to outline the measures and procedures in place at Holy Cross Hospital to manage food allergens effectively. It applies to the storage, handling, preparation, and serving of food within the hospital to ensure the safety and well-being of patients, caregivers, and visitors with food allergies.

6. Responsibilities

- **Chief Executive Officer:**
 - Responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy and reporting serious incidents related to food allergens.
- **Director of Patient Services (DPS):**
 - Must notify the catering department in writing prior to admission if a patient has any food allergies.
 - Ensure that appropriate measures are taken to prevent allergic reactions.
- **Director of Operations:**
 - Provides advice on managing food allergens and ensures compliance with relevant external assurance standards.
 - Reviews all incidents/accidents or near misses reported involving food allergens.
 - Ensures that food items are purchased from reputable suppliers and that complete and accurate records are maintained.
 - Supervises the work of the catering team and coordinates the work of external contractors involved in food preparation and safety.
- **Catering Department (Head Chef):**
 - Responsible for ensuring food and fluid items sent from the catering department do not contain the identified food allergen in confirmed and suspected cases.
 - Uses standard recipes with ingredients from approved suppliers, noting the main 14 food allergens.

- Records any ingredient/supplier changes affecting standard recipes in the standard recipe folder under “recipe deviations” for 6 months.
- Ensures that any food prepared and sent to the wards for a patient with a suspected or confirmed food allergy is appropriate for their needs and labelled with the patient's name, ward, and type of allergy.
- **Senior Nurses**
 - Communicate patients’ new food allergies to catering team
- **All caregivers involved in patient feeding:**
 - Responsible for following procedures regarding the management and use of food items.
 - Ensure single-use food items are not reused (example straws)
 - Follow procedures regarding the management and use of food allergens.
 - Be familiar with the location of Epipen
 - Take Epipen if escorting a patient on an external visit.

7. Definitions

- **Food Allergy:** A condition where the body's immune system reacts to certain allergens in food by producing antibodies, which can cause immediate and severe symptoms such as swollen lips or eyes, vomiting, skin hives, and in extreme cases, difficulties breathing and a severe fall in blood pressure (anaphylactic shock). In extreme cases, this can be fatal.
- **Food Intolerance:** A condition that does not involve the immune system in the same way as a food allergy and is usually less severe. Symptoms typically take longer to appear and may include headaches, fatigue, and digestive problems. Food intolerance is harder to diagnose than a food allergy.
- **Anaphylactic Shock:** A severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction that can occur rapidly. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, a sudden drop in blood pressure, and loss of consciousness. Immediate medical attention is required.
- **Cross-Contamination:** The transfer of allergens from one food item to another, which can occur during food preparation, cooking, or serving. This can happen through shared utensils, surfaces, or equipment.
- **The 14 Food Allergens:** In the United Kingdom, the following 14 food allergens must be listed on all food packaging if present in the food:
 - **Celery:** Includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds, and celeriac. Often found in salads, soups, and stock cubes.
 - **Cereals containing gluten:** Includes wheat, barley, rye, and oats. Found in bread, pasta, cakes, and some processed foods.
 - **Crustaceans:** Includes crabs, lobsters, prawns, and scampi. Often found in shrimp paste used in curries.
 - **Eggs:** Found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, and foods brushed with egg.
 - **Fish:** Found in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, and stock cubes.
 - **Lupin:** Includes lupin seeds and flour. Found in some types of bread, pastries, and pasta.
 - **Milk:** Includes cow's milk, goat's milk, and sheep's milk. Found in butter, cheese, cream, and yoghurt.
 - **Molluscs:** Includes mussels, whelks, squid, and snails. Often found in seafood dishes.

- **Mustard:** Includes liquid mustard, mustard powder, and mustard seeds. Found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces, and soups.
- **Nuts:** Includes almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios, and macadamia nuts. Found in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, ice cream, marzipan, nut butters, and sauces.
- **Peanuts:** Found in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces, groundnut oil, and peanut flour.
- **Sesame seeds:** Found in bread, breadsticks, hummus, sesame oil, and tahini.
- **Soya:** Found in tofu, bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, soya flour, and soya milk. Also found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces, and vegetarian products.
- **Sulphur dioxide (sulphites):** Used as a preservative in dried fruit, meat products, soft drinks, and vegetables. Also found in wine and beer.

8. Policy or Procedure Implementation

8.1 Catering Procedures

The Catering department uses standardised recipes for all menu items prepared in the hospital production kitchen. Each standardised recipe has been analysed for allergens and nutritional information. Chefs will document any changes in ingredients or suppliers that affect standard recipes in the “All in One Record” as recipe deviations. This information will be kept on-site for 13 months as part of the Safer Food Better Business Record system.

Any alterations to the ingredients of a standard recipe that may impact patients with suspected or confirmed allergies will be communicated by phone to the relevant ward and confirmed by email to the Senior Nurse Group before service. The Safer Food Better Business system is adhered to, ensuring the production of safe food for all patients, including those with suspected or confirmed food allergies. The Head Chef is responsible for informing all catering team members about specific requirements for these patients.

The Duty Chef is responsible for ensuring that any food prepared and sent to the wards for patients with suspected or confirmed food allergies is suitable for their needs and labelled with the patient’s name, ward, and type of allergy.

8.2 Caregiver Dining Room

Standard recipes are used for all items sold within the caregiver’s dining room. The Food Standards Agency Allergy and Intolerance Sign is displayed prominently (Appendix 2), and an allergy information folder containing the Allergen Matrix (Appendix 3) is available and can be accessed by any caregivers or visitors.

To comply with legislation regarding food prepared on-site and prepacked for direct sale (PPDS), also known as Natasha’s Law, the catering department no longer offers prepacked foods prepared on-site (e.g., sandwiches, cakes). All food must be ordered through the catering team or will be pre-packaged “grab and go” items such as crisps and chocolate, which have allergy information labelling. The catering team is always available to provide information about allergens in food items cooked on the premises.

8.3 Catering for Functions and Hospitality

The person booking any hospitality is responsible for asking all attendees to notify in advance of any food allergies or dietary requirements. The Catering Team will ensure that food items are clearly labelled with a “Food Allergen” label detailing all possible allergens and that an Allergen Matrix (Appendix 3) is displayed near the point of service.

8.4 Training

- All chefs, including assistant chefs, hold a minimum of Level 2 food safety certificate.
- The Head Chef holds a Level 3 food safety certificate.
- All General Assistants hold a Level 2 food safety certificate.
- All food handlers have received training and adhere to Safer Food Better Business Food safety management standards.
- All food handlers have undergone Food Allergy awareness training and have successfully completed online certificated assessments.
- All chefs must have a minimum Level 2 in food allergen training.
- The Director of Operations (responsible for the catering department) holds a Level 3 in food allergen management, a Level 4 in Managing Food Safety in Catering, and a Level 3 HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) training.

8.5 Communication Strategy

- All Caregivers are trained to pass on any concerns a customer may have regarding food intolerance to a senior chef if they are unsure of product content. All standard recipes for menus are accompanied by an allergen sheet that specifies which allergens are contained in the recipe. These recipes are used daily and are accessible to everyone.
- The main food supplier will provide all allergen information included on the standard recipe sheet directly from their website, including all ingredients, costs, nutrition, and allergens.
- Chefs will always have in-depth knowledge of the components of any dish and can advise patients and customers about the presence of any allergens.
- Clinical Leads will provide details about allergies upon the admission of a new patient, and these will be noted by the catering Team.

9. Regulatory Requirements/ References

- **Food Standards Agency (FSA) Guidance:** The FSA provides comprehensive guidelines on managing food allergens, including labelling requirements and best practices for food safety. These guidelines are essential for ensuring compliance with UK food safety regulations. <https://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/36-types-of-food-allergy>
- **Food Information Regulations 2014:** These regulations require food businesses to provide information about the presence of allergens in food. This includes both prepacked and non-prepacked foods, ensuring that consumers are informed about potential allergens.
- **EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU FIC) No. 1169/2011:** This regulation mandates that food businesses must provide clear and accurate information about allergens

in food products. It covers labelling requirements and the need for allergen information to be easily accessible to consumers.

- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Publications:** The HSE provides guidance on managing health and safety risks in the workplace, including those related to food allergens. This includes best practices for preventing cross-contamination and ensuring safe food handling procedures.
- **Safer Food Better Business (SFBB):** SFBB is a food safety management system developed by the Food Standards Agency to help small businesses comply with food hygiene regulations. It includes practical guidance on managing food allergens and preventing cross-contamination.
- **Food Allergen Labelling and Information Requirements under the Food Information Regulations 2014:** This document provides detailed guidance on the labelling and information requirements for food allergens, ensuring that food businesses comply with legal obligations.
- **Food Safety Act 1990:** This act provides the legal framework for food safety in the UK, including provisions related to the management of food allergens. It outlines the responsibilities of food businesses to ensure that food is safe for consumption.
- **Natasha's Law:** Introduced in October 2021, Natasha's Law requires all food that is prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) to have a full list of ingredients, with the 14 major allergens clearly emphasised. This law aims to provide greater transparency and safety for consumers with food allergies.

10. Evaluation Measures

- **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular audits of food handling, preparation, and service processes to ensure compliance with the policy. These audits should include checks on allergen labelling, storage practices, and adherence to standard recipes.
- **Incident Reporting:** Monitor and review all accidents, incidents and near misses related to food allergens. This includes tracking the number and nature of incidents, investigating causes, and implementing corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- **Training Records:** Maintain and review records of training on food allergen management. Ensure that all relevant team members have completed required training and are up-to-date with best practices.
- **Compliance Checks:** Perform compliance checks to ensure that all food items are correctly labelled with allergen information and that Caregivers are following procedures for managing food allergens.
- **Review of Procedures:** Regularly review and update procedures related to food allergen management to reflect current guidelines and best practices. This includes updating standard recipes, labelling practices, and training materials.
- **Risk Assessments:** Carry out risk assessments for food allergen management processes to identify potential hazards and implement measures to mitigate risks.

11. Related Documents

Catering Policy: Outlines the overall guidelines and procedures for the catering department, including food safety and hygiene practices.

Infection Control Manual: Provides guidelines on preventing and controlling infections, including procedures for cleaning and decontaminating food preparation areas and equipment.

Health & Safety Policy: Details the hospital's commitment to maintaining a safe environment for patients, caregivers and visitors, including measures to manage food allergens.

Accident and Incident Reporting Procedures (detailed in Health and Safety Policy): Outlines the procedures for reporting and investigating accidents and incidents, including those related to food allergens.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality impact Assessment (EIA) Tool

To be considered and where judged appropriate, completed and attached to any policy document when submitted to the appropriate committee for consideration and approval.

Policy Title	Management of Food Allergens
---------------------	-------------------------------------

		Yes/No	Comments
	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race	No	
	Gender reassignment	No	
	Marriage & civil partnership	No	
	Pregnancy & maternity	No	
	Ethnic origins (including gypsies and travelers)	No	
	Nationality	No	
	Sex	No	
	Culture	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Disability- both mental and physical impairments	No	
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
4.	If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
5.	What alternatives are there to achieving	N/A	

	the policy/guidance without the impact?		
6.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	
7.	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	No	

Food Allergy or Intolerance?

If you have a food allergy, intolerance, or coeliac disease – please speak to the staff about the ingredients in your food and drink before you order.

Thank you.



